



Tetra Tech EM Inc.

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June 1, 2000

Mr. Leo Rosales
Community Involvement Coordinator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (P-19J)
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604

Subject: Final Fact Sheet
Sauget Areas 1 and 2 Superfund Sites
Contract No. 68-W7-0003, Work Assignment No. 003-CRCR-05ZZ

Dear Mr. Rosales:

Tetra Tech is pleased to submit the final fact sheet for the above-referenced site. Per your request, enclosed are 50 copies of the fact sheet for your files and distribution. Approximately 210 folded and labeled fact sheets were delivered to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) mailroom for mailing.

Please call Eleanor Sukackas at (312) 856-8770 or me at (847) 818-7178 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Vaccarello
Project Manager

Enclosure

cc: Diane Spencer, EPA Project Officer (letter only)
Peggy Hendrixson, EPA Contracting Officer (letter only)
Cheryl Allen, EPA Work Assignment Manager
Tom Kouris, Tetra Tech Program Manager (letter only)
Eleanor Sukackas, Tetra Tech



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Office of Public Affairs
Region 5
77 West Jackson Boulevard (P-19J)
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Illinois Indiana
Michigan Minnesota
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EPA Interviews Community Residents at the Sauget Areas 1 and 2 Superfund Sites

Sauget and Cahokia, Illinois

June 2000

Introduction

On April 12 and 13, 2000, United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) representatives visited several residents in the villages of Sauget and Cahokia to talk about the Sauget Areas 1 and 2 Sites in Sauget and Cahokia, Illinois. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain feedback from residents on the investigation and cleanup of the Sauget sites. These 13 questions were the most frequently asked questions by the area residents. Each question is followed by an EPA response.

1. How serious is the contamination at the Sauget sites? Is the groundwater highly contaminated?

Dead Creek and the disposal areas (landfills) located near Dead Creek are contaminated with a variety of chemicals including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and dioxins. Area residents, especially children, should avoid contact with the material in the creek. Pursuant to an enforcement agreement, Solutia, with EPA oversight, is currently collecting samples from the creek and the disposal areas and will conduct risk assessments later to determine what risks to human health and the environment might exist. Preliminary sampling data of soils collected near residences in Cahokia show low levels of some chemicals, however, at this time EPA does not feel there is an immediate risk to human health given the low levels of these contaminants. Additional soil samples were recently collected from more homes and EPA will know more about possible risks once that data is interpreted and risk assessments are completed.

The groundwater is already known to be contaminated with a wide variety of chemicals in areas north of the residential areas in Cahokia (near disposal areas near Queeny Avenue). Since all drinking water in Sauget and Cahokia is from a source outside the area of contamination, there is no risk to residents' drinking water supply. If you still have a well, please do not use it for drinking purposes.

2. How will the soil and groundwater be cleaned up?

It is still too early to say for sure what EPA's cleanup plan will look like for the whole site. However, plans are in the works to begin a clean up of a large section of Dead Creek starting later this summer or fall. If this plan goes forward, contaminated sediments will be removed from the creek starting up at Queeny Avenue and going all the way south past Illinois Route 3. These contaminated sediments will be placed into a secure landfill to be built next to Dead Creek south of Queeny Avenue.

3. Are the dioxin and PCB levels harmful to human health?

At the present time, EPA's data for soils on residential properties do not show the levels of PCBs and dioxins to be a significant risk to human health. An evaluation of risk to human health and the environment will be conducted as part of the contamination investigation at Sauget Area 1. Health specialists from the Illinois Department of Public Health are also evaluating the data and will provide EPA with a health assessment in the very near future.

4. Can the residents of Sauget and Cahokia rely on EPA to oversee the cleanup?

Yes. EPA is responsible for overseeing all work to be done, including work currently being done by Solutia. Any cleanup work, including removing the contaminated sediments from Dead Creek, will also be overseen by EPA. In addition, Illinois EPA will provide assistance in overseeing the work done at the site.

5. Are there drums buried in Dead Creek?

EPA does not believe there are any drums buried in the creek. All of the drums found to date are in the disposal areas up near Queeny Avenue near Dead Creek and over at the landfills near the Mississippi River.

6. Why can't the contaminated soils be incinerated?

Incineration is a very expensive option for destroying the contamination. The incineration option will be looked at more carefully later when EPA begins to investigate ways to clean up the disposal areas. For now, the most effective, efficient, and least expensive option for addressing the contaminated sediments in Dead Creek is to place them into a secure landfill on the site.

7. How will EPA get all the potentially responsible parties (PRPs) to contribute financially to the cleanup?

Only one responsible company is needed to conduct and pay for the cleanup. That company may later go to court to try to get some of the money it spent back from the other companies also responsible for the contamination. EPA will attempt to convince all responsible companies to participate in any cleanup actions to be taken in the future so that no single company is liable for the entire cost of the cleanup.

8. When will the risk assessments results be released? Will the sampling data be made available to residents?

The sampling data will be put into a Data Report to be released in January 2001. The Human Health Risk Assessment and the Ecological Risk Assessment will be released in draft form in Spring 2001. Once these documents are final, copies will be placed in the Cahokia Public Library.

9. Is the water that floods basements contaminated?

Sampling conducted by Illinois EPA has not shown any contamination in the water entering basements during flooding.

10. Will Solutia buy out all of the Sauget site properties?

At the present time, there are no plans to buy residential homes. Preliminary data from soil samples near residential areas does not show elevated levels of contaminants. If other data and the risk assessments show a risk to human health, the buy out option may be investigated further by EPA and Solutia.

11. Will Solutia do something about the culverts?

Yes, work has already begun in connection with an Administrative Order issued by EPA to determine which culverts can be expanded to take more water during heavy rain events. Two culverts are to be replaced at Cargill Road and the old Terminal Railroad crossing located west of Illinois Route 3. Upgrading culverts on Dead Creek may also be possible after the contaminated sediments are removed from Dead Creek. These culvert replacement actions should help alleviate some of the flooding in residential areas in Cahokia; however, it is important to remember that this area of St. Clair County is very flat, and groundwater is close to the ground surface. It only takes a moderate rain storm to cause flooding problems. Replacing culverts in Dead Creek will not eliminate any chances for flooded basements and streets in the future.

12. How will the contamination affect people who want to sell their homes?

This is often a problem where people's homes are in close proximity to an area of known contamination. Until the contamination is cleaned up, property values may decrease. EPA is making every effort to keep moving ahead toward a comprehensive cleanup of the Sauget sites and, therefore, make both Cahokia and Sauget a more desirable place to live.

13. What can be done about the grown up children of the area who used to play in Dead Creek and the pond? Can they be tested?

At the present time, there are no plans to conduct any medical monitoring of people living in the area of contamination. If any person living near Dead Creek or the disposal areas, particularly those people who previously used Dead Creek as a place to play, feel they may have health problems related to the contamination in the creek, EPA encourages you to speak with your doctor. EPA will be conducting a human health risk assessment to determine the possible health risks to children and adults from repeated exposures to the contamination. The Illinois Department of Public Health is also evaluating data from soil samples collected from residential properties in Cahokia to also determine what risks may currently be posed by exposure to the soil. This information will be provided to the public once EPA has a final document.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

EPA is committed to keeping residents informed about the activities at the Sauget Areas 1 and 2 Superfund sites. If you have any questions or concerns about the site, please contact the following EPA representatives.

U.S. EPA Contacts

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Sauget Areas 1 and 2 Superfund site information is available for review at the information repository at:

Cahokia Public Library
140 Cahokia Avenue
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(618) 332-1491



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